

## Claims

Sub A2

1. In a data communication system including infrastructure arranged to communicate with a plurality of terminals over a channel,  
5 a method of adaptable channel access practiced at a terminal including the steps of:  
determining an access priority value,  
ascertaining, responsive to said access priority value, when the channel is available, and  
10 executing, responsive to said step of ascertaining, a channel access attempt.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes the steps of:

receiving a message to provide access information, and  
deriving, responsive to said access information, said access  
5 priority value.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said step of receiving a message further provides said access information corresponding to a number of terminals registered for service.

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4. The method of claim 2 wherein said step of receiving a message further provides said access information corresponding to a channel loading factor.

15 5. The method of claim 2 wherein said step of receiving a message further provides said access information corresponding to a system management parameter.

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20 6. The method of claim 5 wherein said step of receiving a message further provides said system management parameter corresponding to a channel priority level.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access  
25 priority value in accordance with a number of channel access attempts.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access priority value in accordance with a terminal priority.

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9. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access priority value in accordance with a change in channel priority.

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10. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining an access priority value further includes a step of deriving said access priority value in accordance with a user selected priority access level.
- 5 11. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of ascertaining further includes a step of receiving an indicator corresponding to the channel availability.
- 10 12. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of ascertaining when said channel is available further includes;  
a step of checking to see if said channel is busy; if so waiting a random time that corresponds to said access priority value; and then rechecking whether said channel is busy.

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